

RED FLAG

MOBILIZE THE MASSES FOR COMMUNISM



THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST WORKERS' PARTY * WWW.ICWPREDFLAG.ORG



Toulouse, France



Paris, France

Yellow Vest Rebellion:

WORKERS PONDER PATH TO REVOLUTION

SEATTLE (USA), December 7—Last Friday, workers around the world were watching the events of Paris. Boeing workers gathered around the shop desktops to watch videos of the Paris “yellow vest” rebellion. Normally, these computers are used to track production. Not surprisingly, we were more interested in the demonstrations than the progress of production.

Comrades and friends spread the discussion personally and via text messages. A central theme emerged. Was this a revolutionary situation? Is it even possible to build for a revolutionary situation today?

The key to communist revolution is the development of a mass party, willing and able to mobilize for communism. This analysis led to discussion about the obstacles to ICWP’s growth. ...and how we can overcome those obstacles.

Industrial Workers Have a Wealth of Experience and Knowledge

Most in our base are keenly aware that racism, xenophobia and nationalism can quickly turn even the most militant fightback (like the yellow vest rebellion) into its opposite. It’s a big obstacle to building a communist movement.

“History tells us that divisions amongst us create [a] divide which would empower the haves ... who control a lot of folks’ destinies,” texted a friend.

More than one commented about the importance of our struggles at work and in the streets around family separations and the caravan. It helped give us confidence that we can destroy the “walls between us” as we build a communist world without borders.

A close friend was a teenager during the 1967 Detroit rebellion. We found it useful to compare this outbreak with that revolt.

The first thing that came up was the role of the bosses’ armed forces. An immigrant worker was fully aware of the U.S. Army’s role in imperialist conquest. She came from one of the occupied countries.

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FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM TO SMASH ALL BORDERS

TIJUANA, MEXICO, December 1—In large or small groups, even alone; it is a constant trickle. The migrants arrive every day, and they do not stop arriving at the already overcrowded shelters in Tijuana. They say there are thousands; nobody counts them anymore. Because in the end, they have never counted. That’s why they had to escape from Central America and shout to the whole world: “WE WANT TO WORK, WE ARE HUNGRY, THEY ARE KILLING OUR FAMILIES!” And on their journey they have met with enormous human solidarity, but also with metal walls with spikes, and walls of hate, hatred that continues to grow slowly.

Recently, there was a sad day for the volunteers of the shelters who, day after day, take care of this new group of refugees. Previously they had done this with the Haitians who arrived by the thousands, and many still live in the poor neighborhoods of Tijuana.

A volunteer, a friend of ICWP, commented about his frustration with the events that took place on Sunday, November 25, when a peaceful march got out of control and was attacked by the US Border Patrol with tear gas. They also used rubber bullets that wounded several members of the caravan, and sent a member of a pro-migrant group to the hospital.

These events, says the volunteer, affect the morale of everyone who saw a lively march begin, and return defeated. In the voice of the volunteer who has been helping in the shelters assisting the deported immigrants and migrants in transit, one hears, and feels the impotence. He and his cousins have been helping in the shelters and collection centers. In the house of a grandmother who died, they called to collect all that could be useful. They involved the whole family, young and old, who have collaborated in the preparation of food and other chores. An immigrant family, according to the volunteer: “With a big heart.”

Clothes are scarce, food is limited. The cough is a symphony that predicts greater evils and gnaws more at the children. A plague of lice also

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**THIS IS A
FOUR-WEEK
ISSUE**

“Yellow Vests” Need Red Flags

MASS PROTESTS IN FRANCE CALL US TO BUILD THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST WORKERS’ PARTY

December 9 — Hundreds of thousands of “gilets jaunes” (“yellow vests”) have been rebelling in the streets of France since November 19. They are enraged with French president Macron, his government, and the French ruling class.

“It is like a volcano,” commented an MTA bus operator in Los Angeles. “The pressure just built up until it exploded.”

On December 1, demonstrations in Paris erupted into militant protests. A huge army of gilets jaunes chased the police away from Napoleon’s Triumphal Arch. They tagged it with slogans like “Down with wars among the people – No more peace among the classes.”

Some trashed the gift shop for good measure. On the Champs Elysées, playground of the rich, they attacked banks and luxury boutiques and put up burning barricades. All the politicians were horrified by this violence.

“It’s also violent when at the end of the month there’s no food in the fridge to feed your kids,” said a mother, a gilet jaune.

On December 8, masses of police kept demonstrators away from the Arch. They simply spread out, both in Paris and outside the capital. A few days later Macron announced some concessions, like raising the minimum wage. Most of it turned out to be smoke and mirrors. The uprising continues.

The movement started as a mass protest against higher gas taxes, organized through social media. Its emblem is the yellow safety vest every driver in France must keep in their car.

It quickly expanded around the theme of “purchasing power.” Most French people have difficulty just making ends meet at the end of the month. Over 14% live below the poverty line. In largely immigrant suburbs of Paris, the rate jumps to almost 40%. France’s social “safety net” is full of holes. Over two-thirds of unemployed workers who qualify for benefits don’t actually receive them.

French capitalists export more agricultural



Yellow vest protests in Belgium: “No to Fascism!”

food products than any other EU nation but French children go hungry!

This would all be unthinkable in a communist society. Everyone’s needs will be met, as far as possible, throughout each month. No hungry kids. No need for money. No one scraping by while others live in luxury.

Macron’s Not-So-Fresh Ideas: Make Workers Pay for Capitalism’s Crisis

Macron was billed as an “innovator” with “fresh ideas.” First, he handed over billions of euros to the wealthy, in the form of tax breaks. Then he cut subsidies for low income renters. Next came austerity measures that reduced pensions, raised gas prices, and cut municipal public services.

Not to forget tearing up the labor code, ending rail workers’ benefits, persecuting the unemployed, turning away refugees, mistreating immigrants, favoring supermarkets over farmers, and on and on.

This is the same old same-old we have seen around the world as capitalism’s global crisis of overproduction has intensified and competition among capitalists has sharpened. Their solution is always to make the workers pay.

Also on November 19, amid massive street protests in Argentina, the Argentine government approved an austerity budget for 2019 that cuts social spending and raises debt payments to satisfy the International Monetary Fund. Hundreds of thousands marched in Buenos Aires against capitalism to protest the “G20” imperialist summit on November 30.

In Iran, sugar refinery workers have disrupted Friday prayers with chants of “Death to the oppressor!” and

truckers, honked in approval. People pulled over with donations of food and money.

This movement has, intentionally, no public figureheads. Too many people have seen too many leaders and parties sell out too many times. In particular, most have no use for the fascist Marine Le Pen.

In all loosely-organized populist movements, however, there is a struggle over political ideas. Without a clear internationalist communist working-class line, capitalist ideas pose a real danger. For example, during the Great Depression in France, as in Germany, mass movements of both fascists and anti-fascists grew and fought in the streets.

In France today, as in May 1968, a revolutionary situation would be taking shape if there were a revolutionary party capable of leading masses to communism. But there isn’t.

All the ‘leftist’ organizations in France are saying the same thing: let’s fight even harder for even better reforms. One gilet jaune said, “They’re offering us crumbs, we want a meal.” A meal? Surely, we want the whole kitchen!

Masses in Motion Anywhere Create Communist Opportunities Everywhere

Our International Communist Workers’ Party (ICWP) does not yet have an on-the-ground presence in France. If we did, we would be raising massively the need to mobilize directly for communism, not for reforms. If we were strong enough, we’d lead armed struggle for communist workers’ power.

Meanwhile, we need to take advantage of this situation so that we come out a little closer to communism – and the end of barely making ends meet.

In Seattle (USA) comrades in Boeing are watching videos of the French uprising and talking about communism (see page 1).

In Los Angeles (USA) the ICWP garment club watched the videos, cheering the masses who fought the cops. They discussed how to build the Party in Mexico, El Salvador and elsewhere, as well as Los Angeles.

The communist slogan “Workers of the world, Unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains!” has never been more to the point. Together we have a communist world to win.



Paris: “The real vandals are the heads of state”



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Mexican President Obrador:

THE ILLUSION OF A CHANGE THAT WON'T HAPPEN AND THE URGENT TASK OF BUILDING THE PARTY

MEXICO—Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) took office as president of Mexico on December 1. Thousands of people gathered in the main square of Mexico City to celebrate the beginning of his term. Millions of workers, teachers and young people, inside and outside of Mexico, celebrated this as a great triumph.

And it is logical that, after 70 years of governments of the PRI and the PAN, plagued by corruption scandals, benefits for the ruling class, massacre and repression, AMLO's proposals to end corruption and implement reforms for the benefit of the majority fill the masses who crave a better life with hope.

"People have a lot of illusions in him. They've been waiting for a change for a long time," said a young *Red Flag* reader in a recent ICWP study group. At the meeting in Mexico City we analyzed and discussed his speech, and our proposals.

The most significant reforms that he has promised are: the repeal of educational reform, a scholarship program, construction of 100 universities, increase of workers' wages, lower gasoline prices, and reactivation of agriculture.

We don't deny that these reforms can benefit in some way a part of the working class for a time. But for a real transformation that will lead to a life that will allow us to develop our human potential, reforms are not a viable path

By keeping production relations intact and preaching the reconciliation of social classes (just like that all the other leftists who have governed bourgeois states) reforms can be reversed when in the future the crisis of capitalism sharpens.

In the discussion, another young woman said that six years is not enough time to make a profound and radical change. A comrade teacher responded that if the masses controlled the way production is carried out and the most important decisions in society, in six years we could do vastly more than what AMLO can do from the bourgeois state.

The working class, if it wants to enjoy the fruits of its labor, must put an end to the material base of capitalism and create its own political-military organizations which will allow it to defend what it has won.

"So, what do we do? Organize!" said a young party member. The urgent task is to mobilize industrial and agricultural workers, students and intellectuals for communism. This won't be possible if we limit ourselves to criticizing reformist governments. We have to be creative to strengthen our party structure with a plan and a strategy to organize more and more people.

The working class in Mexico stands on territory that has the potential to make the revolution that can be the spark to light the prairie fire. A communist revolution in Mexico will put into the working class's hands enough resources to start a fierce struggle against decadent capitalism and at the same time to meet the needs of the masses in the areas controlled by the party.

Within the study group there are different points of view about what AMLO may or may not do. But we agree on the need to continue discussing and carrying out activ-

ities, such as passing out leaflets at the factories, to organize more people to come to our study circles and to the party. As one of the young women concluded, "For a revolution, an evolution of consciousness is needed first."



May Day, Mexico City, 2013

Do you Like Communism?

ALL OF US MUST HAVE WHAT WE NEED TO LIVE DECENTLY AND REALIZE OUR FULL POTENTIAL

LOS ANGELES, USA—A mechanic we'll call X came to a recent meeting of MTA (Public Transport) mechanics in the shop. We had had conversations with him before when we had given him this newspaper. He had also come to meetings with the group of mechanics where we explained the Party's politics. In these meetings he had expressed doubts and questions about communist ideas.

At this meeting, X said he had hopes and expectations of an economically stable life for his family. We asked him what he thought of communism. He answered that he did not agree much with the idea of communism because sharing was not something he liked. He wasn't sure that communism was something he wanted to fight for.

Then he asked a co-worker "What about you? Do you like communism?"

The co-worker replied "Yes. It's the best soci-

ety that the working class could live in."

X questioned him, "But you like money?"

The co-worker responded, "I live in capitalism. We are conditioned to live this way. For me, money is not what's important. I want all of us to have what we need to live decently, so that we can develop our full potential as human beings."

Another mechanic added, "You have to understand that capitalism is in a decline that will probably lead to a third world war. If you read *Red Flag*, you see that millions of people worldwide migrate from one place to another in order to find favorable conditions for their very subsistence.

"Capitalism can't provide the working class with economic or social stability," he continued. "The system doesn't work for the majority, but only for a very few. You only have to see the hospitals all over the world full of sick people and lacking medicines, or millions of empty houses and millions of people living the streets. Think about how you as a young person probably won't have a pension when you retire. Many companies are taking away pensions from their workers. Social security is in debt. It's very likely that young workers will no longer be covered."

X asked "So, how can we build a movement that can destroy capitalism? I don't see how that can be possible."

The same mechanic responded, "The revolutionary communist movement is not as big as we would like, but we have political work in many parts of the planet. There are people around the world discussing our ideas. Sometimes, it seems

that the communist movement doesn't advance. It seems to be stagnant. But sometimes social change occurs so fast that you can see movements that achieve historical changes in a short time.

"An example is the Bolshevik revolution," he continued, "where for the first time, a state was built for the working class. Then there was the Chinese revolution, where the masses took power from the bosses, and so on successively. So, why are these countries what they are now?"

"Due to ideological errors that we can recognize today. They implemented an initial phase of what they thought was communism that maintained the material basis of capitalism, what we know as socialism or state capitalism.

"Now we propose and fight directly for communism. That's why we talk directly to you about what communism is."

X responded, "Ok, now I get it. What can I do to help?" (It sounds like it happened fast, but this change was really the result of a whole process of meetings and discussions.)

The mechanic answered, "You can start by giving out the newspaper and talking to your friends about these ideas. There are many people in the various divisions of MTA who know the Party. At a decisive moment they will be willing to support our cause."

X asked "When and where is the next meeting?"

Another mechanic answered, "The meetings will be here, in the shop and they will be every week."

And that's how our discussion ended.



ELECTIONS: A TRAP THAT THE CAPITALISTS USE TO FOOL THE WORKING CLASS

EL SALVADOR—For the presidential election coming in February 2019, people are confronting two visions about the future of the country. One is the supposed “no ideology” vision “neither left nor right” led by Nayib Bukele and the electoral political group New Ideas. They propose a “new way of doing politics,” to reduce the problems of capitalist society by fighting corruption and making public spending more efficient.

On the other hand, there are the “renewing” currents of the Farabundo Martí Front for National Liberation (FMLN) and Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA), parties that have traditionally been in power during the last three decades. These political parties mutate into renewed or “new” versions of themselves to continue being useful to capitalism.

Both roads promote the illusion that elections in bourgeois democracy can help the workers. The four candidates respond to the interests of different business groups: such as the Poma group, the Siman family, the Bukele, Alba Group, José Luis Merino, interests allied with the US, the Communist Party of China, etc.

Under no circumstances should we believe that any government that emerges from the election of Nayib Bukele, Carlos Calleja (ARENA) or Hugo Martínez (FMLN) will represent the interests of the working class. History shows us that

no election or government that emerges from it has solved the “problems of the Salvadoran working class.”

Are elections the solution to the problems of the working class?

No. The electoral process is financed by the same bourgeoisie that presents the new list of candidates from which the working class is forced to choose the next administrators of the State, a state in the service of the interests of big capital.

It is vital that the communists in the International Communist Workers’ Party (ICWP) be part of the discussions that take place daily in the factories, at home, in the university, at the store with the neighbors, wherever there arise discussions about the “electoral problem.”

Those are the opportunities to unmask the traitors to the working class who disguise themselves as saviors, but who are nothing more than pawns of different business groups confronting each other.

Communist revolution needs the daily commitment of the ICWP members because every day the working class is attacked by the propaganda and opinion programs of the bourgeoisie.

We need to distribute *Red Flag* to generate discussion of the current political and economic situation, both locally and globally.

These elections are occurring against the back-

drop of the confrontation between the Chinese economy that seeks to enter fully into Latin America and the economic interests of the US capitalists (through free trade agreements) that are being weakened by strong Chinese investment.

But a maquila is a concentration camp whether the owner is a boss from the United States or a boss who comes anointed by the Communist Party of China!

Forward towards authentic transformations through a workers’ communist revolution!



AT THE BORDER from page 1

cohabits with the poorest. Migrants and volunteers live and coexist in these conditions.

The campaign of hate is gradually winning a certain part of the population of Tijuana, especially in the middle class that has no problems crossing the border. They are the privileged ones, but they are influencing the rest of the population. Outside the shelter located in downtown Tijuana,

in the North zone, a group of racists tried to beat some migrants who responded to the aggression, and ended up being arrested.

But in spite of everything, the majority of migrants are willing to continue to the end. So are the volunteers who are doing commendable work.

Students from the Ibero-Americana University have fitted out showers so that the migrants can bathe privately.



BOEING WORKERS, from page 1

She didn’t know that this same army was sent into Detroit to put down the rebellion. The media makes a big deal of the phony debate about what the law allows the armed forces to do on U.S. soil. Nobody was buying it. We all agreed that when push comes to shove, the bosses’ army is there to preserve the power of the capitalists.

At the same time, this army contains the seeds of communist revolution. Ever since the Vietnam war, it has become clear that rank-and-file U.S. soldiers can turn the guns on the capitalists, making revolution possible.

The comparisons to Detroit continued. The picture of the working-class students outside Paris kneeling before riot cops sparked infuriating memories for our comrade. So, too, the crash-

ing barricades, tear gas, and baton-wielding cops!

On the other hand, the Detroit rebellion was overtly anti-racist and involved more industrial workers from the onset.

Key Element of Revolutionary Situation

Despite these differences, one glaring similarity remained. Both rebellions lack [or lacked] the key ingredient necessary for communist revolution: a mass ICWP with an even more mass base among industrial workers, soldiers and students.

“It will only get worse,” commented another immigrant machinist. The capitalist crisis is intensifying, and rebellions will only get more frequent. But we can’t wait for big rebellions to activate communist organizers. We must enter every struggle, big or small, with communist politics upfront.

lost from the tourism industry if the border were sealed. The US cities that border Tijuana would also be affected, and in the long run the entire country. In fact, it is estimated that the city of San Ysidro alone, a small community on the US side, lost US\$ 5.3 million in the hours that they closed the border. That’s what worries the bosses the most. Not the lives of human beings who are looking for work to sustain their families.

Capitalism’s crises make communism necessary

The crises that capitalism provokes are not going to end in one fell swoop. Forced migration is part of this unjust system. The millions of migrants who roam the world, seek work, refuge, security, things that the capitalist system can not offer them.

The bosses are busier creating wars to get markets to satisfy their thirst for profits. In fact, the drums of war are already beating again on the Russia/Ukraine border, which would again cause thousands more migrants.

Fascism and war are coming. We have to crush them, it is a necessity; it is an obligation. And only by fighting for Communism can we win the battle.

It was only a few months ago that some comrades and friends thought the French were hoodwinked by Macron’s liberalism: that not much progress was possible.

It was interesting to watch Boeing workers glued to the computers watching the yellow vest demonstrations. Now our job is to get out from behind these computers into communist discussion and debate.

More are reading *Red Flag*. Now it is our job to get more to distribute and write for the paper.

More are considering communism. Our job now is to get them to raise these communist ideas with their friends and to join the party. This is what we have to concentrate on now to create revolutionary communist situations in the future.

Democrat Politicians Defend Bosses' Borders

THE COMMUNIST MASSES WILL BUILD A WORLD WITHOUT BORDERS

LOS ANGELES, US—"There's a lot of sympathy and support for the immigrant workers and their families who came in the caravan—both here and in Mexico. Some of my friends are collecting clothes to send to the people camped out in Tijuana," said a friend.

A comrade said, "There is an outpouring of support for the immigrants in Tijuana. Many are collecting clothes, food and blankets and bringing them to the people waiting at the border. Those camped in Tijuana are organizing among themselves to help each other, share what little they have, and to make lists for asylum applications. They are distributing according to need and acting collectively."

This shows that the masses can organize ourselves and share, and do so across borders! This shows that communism will work, and how it will work!

We talked about borders that were created by

capitalism along with nations. Communism will eliminate both. Everyone will be welcome and needed everywhere to help contribute to produce for the needs of all. We won't be forced to compete for jobs which turn us into the capitalists' wage slaves in order to survive.

Not yet convinced about the need for a communist revolution, the friend continued: "The Democrats are at least better than the Republicans on immigration. They attack Trump's vile anti-immigrant racism."

"They're not better," our comrade explained.

On November 22, Hillary Clinton said, "Europe needs to get a handle on migration because that is what lit the flame. I admire the compassionate approaches by leaders like Angela Merkel but I think Europe must send a clear message 'we are not going to be able to continue to provide refuge and support.'"

Since Trump and right-wing politicians in Europe

got elected based on racism against immigrants, she called for limiting immigration and aid for refugees. That is, take over the fascists' program in order to "stop" them! She was immediately praised by anti-immigrant fascist politicians in Europe for "seeing the light."

A few days later, Thomas Friedman wrote in *The New York Times*, the liberal imperialist campaigner against Trump, a column saying "We Need a High Wall with a Big Gate." He states, "I don't think the Democratic Party is just for open borders." He calls for "securing the border" and passing laws that offer

immigrants a path to citizenship—comprehensive immigration reform.

Currently, worldwide there are nearly 70 million migrants seeking refuge for their survival. They are fleeing wars, economic crisis and climate disasters. This is the result of capitalism's inevitable crises of overproduction, imperialist wars and global warming. The same economic crisis has led masses in France into the streets to take on the system of the rich.

Friedman calls for expanding the military and the Peace Corps to help "stabilize small farms and governance in a world of disorder." In the 1960s, the Peace Corps was exposed as a front for the CIA. So he is really talking about a two-pronged strategy for imperialist subjugation: the military and its Peace Corps/CIA front.

More and more people favor open borders or no borders and an end to deportations. Many are supporting the immigrants at the border. But they must not count on liberal capitalist politicians!

The masses need a communist understanding that the working class is a global human family and needs no borders or immigration laws. They need to join the ICWP and mobilize for a communist revolution to get rid of these evils.

The way to put an end to the capitalist disasters causing more people to seek refuge than at any time since World War II is with communist revolution. The masses can mobilize for and win a communist world. Refugees must and will be welcomed everywhere that has been liberated. We will replace borders and nations with one communist world and one International Communist Workers' Party mobilizing the masses everywhere to spread revolution and production and distribution for need. The solidarity and sharing at the border show us the way forward.



Barcelona, 2017: Demanding that the Spanish government accept more refugees

LETTERS

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LETTERS

CRITICISM AND SUGGESTIONS

The VBS Mutual Bank Looting

It has been labeled as the greatest bank heist. The VBS Mutual Bank was formed under the Mutual Bank Act to provide banking services to individuals, small businesses and stokvels (informal rotating credit and savings organizations). Mutual banks are different than commercial banks because some types of deposits in a mutual bank qualify as an ownership stake in the bank.

Last year the banks' deposits doubled from R1,2 billion to R2,4 billion. (\$85-170 million USD) This is because some municipalities deposited money in the bank. This was not consistent with the Municipal Finance Management Act that allows them to only bank with commercial banks. These Municipalities were instructed by the National Treasury to stop using the mutual bank. This resulted in a number of councils withdrawing more than R1 billion, causing a liquidity crisis. This forced the reserve bank governor to place it under curatorship.

A few months ago the very same bank made headlines for paying millions of rands to the brother of the deputy president of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) and the EFF political party. It also paid money to the ruling party's officials and to the South African Communist Party. This is the very same bank which in 2016 "lent" the former president (Zuma) money to pay back the money used in his home.

These payments left the bank unable to pay its clients. The worst affected are the poor working class who deposited money into the

bank.

In a communist society there will be no banks because we will do away with the fundamental basis of the problems caused by this Capitalist system, which is money. The working class will collectively decide what is needed by them. There will be no few individuals called the "government officials" that will receive special privileges. Everyone will contribute according to their ability and commitment and in return receive according to their needs. There will be continuous struggle against individualism, which results in greed and corruption. We can achieve this by joining the International Communist Workers' Party and fighting directly for communism

—A comrade in South Africa

Fight Racism and Nationalism Workers of the World Unite!

In our recent meeting as a collective we were discussing about what the party can do to speed up the unity within the working class because for us to achieve our goal of a communist revolution there has to be unity within our class.

A comrade of mine shared a story about how race is preventing unity of workers at his workplace. They were planning a strike to demand higher wages. When a meeting was called so that they could find common ground before they approached their Union, he noticed that some of the workers were hesitant to talk because they feared that some of the coloured workers (those

who are of mixed black and white ancestry) would tell management who were the ring leaders. This is a typical example of the notion that all coloureds at work are spies for the bosses.

This dangerous generalization is widespread in all the industrial areas we visit. My comrade made attempts to struggle with those workers, telling them that its like saying that black people can't have cancer because most of the people you know who have cancer are white.

He struggled with them not to generalize because not all coloureds are spies for the bosses. It is not a colour thing. These are our class brothers. They attended the meeting not to spy but to stand with us in our fight against the bosses.

—A Comrade in South Africa



Life Sentence for Cyntoia Brown Shows Need for Communist Revolution

TENNESSEE, USA—Cyntoia Brown, a 16-year-old runaway, was drugged and forced into prostitution by a 24-year-old pimp called Kut Throat. He sold her to a 43-year-old pedophile, Johnny Allen, who raped her and threatened her with his weapons. Cyntoia pulled a hand-gun from her purse and shot Allen dead.

Was Cyntoia allowed a “stand your ground” defense like racist murderer George Zimmerman who killed Trayvon Martin? Was Kut Throat charged with child sex trafficking? NO! Cyntoia got 60-years-to-life for first-degree murder. She

has already been in prison for 12 years. She won't be eligible for parole until she turns 69.

Cyntoia's story is a stark condemnation of capitalism's sexism, racism, and market mentality. In communism, nothing and nobody will be bought and sold. Certainly not sex. Certainly not children.

Communism will end private property and capitalist production relations which are all based on exploitation (wage slavery). This will abolish the material basis of racism and sexism.

Communism will build strong communities that will help children like Cyntoia flourish, instead of allowing them to be abused and then throwing them in prison.

Communism will enable us to struggle suc-

cessfully to end the mentality that people – especially females – exist to be “used” for sex or profit. It will make it possible to end sexism and racism at last.

READ OUR PAMPHLET, THE COMMUNIST FIGHT AGAINST SEXISM

at

icwpredflag.org/sxse.pdf

LETTERS

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LETTERS

CRITICISM AND SUGGESTIONS

Overproduction is the Main Contradiction in the World Today

What is currently the principal (main) contradiction in the world? *Red Flag* says that China-US rivalry is the main contradiction. I disagree.

I believe that the main contradiction is that between the forces of capitalist production and the capitalist relations of production. Today this takes the form of overproduction and resulting chronic economic stagnation and massive unemployment.

Marx and Engels placed great importance on this contradiction. In *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* Marx said

At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an era of social revolution.

In other words this contradiction sets in motion other contradictions—in particular, class struggle—which lead to revolution.

One thing that comes up in conversations with friends and family about Brazil is, how can workers, and women especially, vote for a fascist sexist dog like Bolsonaro? Overproduction helps explain this.

Overproduction caused the fall of the ‘soft’ socialist Lula. While Lula was in power the economy boomed thanks to raw material exports, especially to China. Lula could afford some social spending, which made him popular. Then the market contracted, prices dropped, and China cut back orders. No more social spending. Instead unemployment, austerity, and crime. Desperate Brazilians turned to Bolsonaro.

Communism will smash these relations of production and resolve the contradiction. Under communism, we will produce as much as we want of whatever we want..

Under capitalism, however, the relations of production (the market) limit what can be produced, in spite of technological advances. The world's factories are capable of producing far more than the world's capitalists can sell. Worldwide capacity usage is about 80%.

One result of overproduction is massive global unemployment – perhaps a billion worldwide. In South Africa, more than half of all young people have no job. In Greece, one third. Even in ‘advanced’ France one in five young people are unemployed.

This letter has a blog supplement (icwp-web.wordpress.com) in which I argue that overproduction lies behind the most important developments in the world today.

—A comrade

The Main Contradiction in World Capitalism

Communist dialectical philosophy says that the main causes of changes in a system are its internal conflicts, called dialectical contradictions. Usually there is one contradiction that is bigger than others, called the **main** contradiction.

Besides the main contradiction there are many others. Capitalism always has contradictions between the capitalist class and the working class. One way of expressing this is as a contradiction between capitalist social relations of production, that is capitalist exploitation of the working class, and the forces of production. The working class is the most important force of production. Since this contradiction is always present in capitalism, it is called capitalism's **fundamental** contradiction.

Sometimes the fundamental contradiction is the main one. That means that the struggle between the working class and the capitalist class is so intense that it determines the major changes in the world capitalist system. This is not the current situation. Without communist leadership, the working class is too weak and divided to challenge the capitalists for power. We are not in a revolutionary situation.

The current main contradiction is part of a network of conflicts between imperialist powers, US vs. China, US vs. Europe, US vs. Russia, etc. Right now the strongest of these contradictions is the US vs China. This contradiction involves serious struggles over economic issues, and increasing military confrontation, especially in the South China Sea.

An important area of inter-imperialist conflict is about markets. Most big capitalists own more capacity to produce than they can find markets to sell to. This is called “overcapacity,” but some people call it “overproduction.” One clear case of world-wide overcapacity is in cars and trucks. US carmakers are fighting German and Japanese manufacturers for markets and China is ramping up their auto industry and competing for markets in other sectors, like steel.

It is not correct to say that overproduction caused the victory of the right-wing government in Brazil. The main economic factor was the 2008 economic crisis, caused by the falling rate of profit. This crisis dis-

credited the ruling parties of many countries. The crisis produced mass misery, misery the ruling parties did not (or could not) do much to relieve. That is why the Right has become a major political force in the US, Germany, Italy, France, the UK, Poland, Greece and Brazil, among others.

Economics was not all of it, however. The Brazilian regimes of Lula and Dilma Rousseff were exposed as massively corrupt. Likewise the Clintons were shown to be crooks in the US, raking in many \$millions while Hillary was Secretary of State. Overcapacity in auto and aircraft has had an effect in Brazil, but did not bring down the government.

Overproduction is not the main cause of world-wide unemployment, either. Because of low profit rates, capitalists can't find enough profitable investments that might create jobs. Partly this is because world markets for new production are not there, That is why capitalist are fighting each other to see who gets to sell in the markets that exist or will exist.

The other big factor in unemployment is the falling rate of profit. A low rate of profit causes low investment and few jobs created. This showed up in the big US corporate tax cut in 2017. This allowed corporations' foreign profits into the US at a very low tax rate.

Few of these corporations are using the money for job-creating investments. Instead they are buying their own stock, paying stockholders bigger dividends, paying down debts and other things that don't produce jobs. They do this because the rate of profit on new investments would be low.

Generally speaking the falling rate of profit is the main cause for capitalist crises, failures and miseries. The exception is overcapacity that increases the fight for markets between imperialist powers, one of the reasons that the main contradiction in the world is China-US rivalry.

—A comrade



World Rate of Profit, 1869 – 2010 (Source: E. Maito)

HOW “RED” CAN UNITE “YELLOW” AND “GREEN”

The global climate crisis is real, even if the worst consequences are still decades away. The world does need to transition away from fossil fuels as rapidly as possible. But Macron’s fiasco with higher diesel and gas taxes in France goes to show that capitalism can make this happen – if at all – only at the expense of the working class.

Macron campaigned heavily around a program of implementing the Paris Climate Accord by reducing carbon emissions by 75%. The “yellow vests” forced him to back down from the taxes that were supposed to help do that.

Are the “yellow vests” climate-deniers and anti-environmentalists? No! They targeted the fuel tax because it hit low-income workers the hardest, further reducing their standard of living. At that, it would barely put a dent in the problem compared with carbon emissions from industrial production and the military.

Capitalist economics seeks “efficient market solutions” like carbon taxes. These raise the cost of pollution and therefore supposedly drive down demand. Will corporations absorb those costs

and accept lower profits? They can’t!

For well over a century, finance capital has dominated the global economy. Its basic inner drive is to maximize profits. So higher carbon costs are passed along to workers as a lower standard of living.

We – the masses – are caught between the proverbial rock and a hard place. Our short-term survival needs are in contradiction with our long-term survival needs. Only communist revolution can get us out of this trap.

Communism has no markets. We won’t exchange things for money or anything else. Instead we will SHARE according to need. Communism’s inner drive is to maximize the satisfaction of our NEEDS – including our need for a livable planet.

Yes, we’ll have to make some hard choices. But we will make them together, taking everyone’s needs into account. Our International Communist Workers’ Party will organize as many people as possible—eventually, everyone—into an interconnected network of collectives to make these decisions, carry them out and

evaluate the results.

In communism, everyone will benefit but no one will profit.

Is this possible? Hell yeah! Human beings lived in communistic societies for tens of thousands of years. Some lived that way well into the 20th century.

Class society arose relatively recently, about eight thousand years ago. It has gone through major changes. Feudalism superseded slavery. Capitalism superseded feudalism. The disappearance of the “middle class” today is the culmination of an increasing polarization of the world into the masses of exploited and the handful of exploiters.

Communist revolution won’t simply change the form of class society. It will abolish classes altogether.

The “yellow vests” are showing the power of the masses in motion. This is the power – when mobilized for communism – that will save our lives on earth.

LETTERS

LETTERS

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CRITICISM AND SUGGESTIONS

Interesting discussion among Comrades about Communism

Do we often wonder why communism didn’t work or if it is really an old-fashioned or obsolete system? Capitalist propaganda has done a great job in discrediting the collapse of past socialist revolutions, arguing that communism failed. But communism did not collapse. What didn’t work were the socialist systems which are simply capitalist reforms where forms of production came under the control of other bosses’ elites.

If you are one of these people who wonder about communism, the ICWP cordially invites you to attend our next meeting. There you will be able to bring your doubts and above all your ideas about how to help build a better world for your family and humanity!

My participation in a recent meeting with ICWP comrades made me very interested to hear about these issues. I was particularly interested in the discussion about the caravan of Central Americans that left their respective countries for the United States. It is a situation that is generating controversy. The Trump administration is taking advantage of it to continue with its policy of attacks on the undocumented, blaming them for being part of the current problem and threatening that they will be repressed if they try to cross the U.S. border.

I would like to emphasize that these meetings are constructive. They help you learn about events around the world. I liked the way a couple of comrades did their analysis. One comrade said that as members of the ICWP they should start by leading their lives without capitalist practices in order to set a better example. The other comrade did not completely agree with her but I respect her point of view, adding that in one way or another they are already overcoming those bad capitalist habits that affect our development.

Personally I thought both analyses were very elaborate but in essence I think revolutionaries should fight any weakness and I agree very much that setting an example helps to give others more confidence.

It would be better if, instead of emigrating to other countries, these workers who still have illusions about the capitalist system made a communist revolution against those who are

the oppressors. Then they wouldn’t continue to risk their lives in these voyages and they would avoid entering the mouths of other wolves!

Fighting is not an option! It’s a necessity! Join ICWP, the party of all workers for everyone!

—Eager for more

Bosses Fight Over War Policy

It is clear that part of the US ruling class wants to change course in Yemen to end the war there. The Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), which speaks for top US imperialists, is arguing to make a deal in Yemen. One of its key spokesmen, Richard Haass, also has been arguing since October, that Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) and his policies must be rejected.

While Trump’s son in law Jared Kushner was becoming best buddies with MBS, the Saudi ruler, these US rulers have a different outlook. While Trump appears to want to confront Iran and to encourage the Saudis to do so whenever and wherever they want, including in the disastrous war in Yemen, the top imperialists do not want a military confrontation with Iran in the Middle East.

Haass and others in the CFR warn that the US must not continue to let the Saudis drag the US into an unwanted war against Iran.

The US imperialists are in decline and further isolated, as the recent G 20 meeting showed. They have no good options. They are fighting among themselves about the best way to fight for their empire and lost world domination.

But the top imperialists would rather confront the Russians in Eastern Europe and the Chinese in the South China Sea than in the Middle East. They want to cut their losses, try to extricate US military and financial resources from the Middle East in order to concentrate in the South China Sea and Eastern Europe.

The working class has no friends among these or any other imperialists. The bosses are making their war plans. The fight of the masses of workers, students and soldiers everywhere, must be to build ICWP worldwide to mobilize for communist revolution to put an end to the system based on competition and war for profit and empire. We need to build a communist world based on sharing the products of our

labor to meet the needs of the masses everywhere.

—Comrades in the US

Write About Racism in Mexico and Central America

Reading the latest edition of *Red Flag* has been a very pleasant experience. There are very good articles. Some were very analytical and easy to read. One suggestion: if you could publish the photos in color, it would make the newspaper more attractive.

What I want to say is, I’ve noticed in *Red Flag* that the articles you publish about racism focus more on the United States or European countries where the white population is in the majority. That’s fine, but I think there should be more articles about racism and nationalism in other countries, especially where there are Party clubs: Mexico and El Salvador. In conversations with Salvadoran immigrants they state that there’s no racism there because they are all mestizos. I have always believed that this is not true and that all over the world, there will always be people who are discriminated against as long as capitalism exists.

Doing a little search on the Internet I found websites and blogs that show the other side of the coin. Peoples who celebrate their black saints in festivities. An anthropologist also states that in addition to Afro-descendants, there are indigenous people who are now called farmworkers, not indigenous.

I would like to know what the comrades in El Salvador think, and if they could write about this. The same with the comrades from Mexico. Can they write something as well, because it is not only the progressive North and the underdeveloped South.

I want to do my part and I’m going to try to write about Guatemala. In these times when racism and nationalism are raging against immigrants and fascism is just around the corner, fighting against it is a priority.

—A Friend in Los Angeles



Los Angeles Teachers Prepare to Strike

STUDENTS DESERVE COMMUNISM

LOS ANGELES, US, Dec. 12—United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA) is ready to strike for the “Schools Students Deserve.” They’re demanding—more urgently than a wage increase—lower class size, more support staff, less standardized testing, and community schools with lots of social service support in the areas where working-class students have been most impacted by capitalist crisis.

But capitalism is in crisis and can only get worse. It’s an illusion to think that the public schools can be islands that protect our young people in a sea of crisis.

Our students deserve a communist world, where we work together to feed, clothe and house the masses of workers. A world where no one lives in luxury while others are hungry and homeless. A world where, breaking down the divisions between old and young, between work and school, we learn from each other while we learn to protect the planet as we meet the needs of all.

Capitalist crisis impacts schools, teachers and students

Capitalist crisis, war and climate disaster have caused mass suffering around the world. The waves of refugees coming across the Mediterranean and north from Central America are the sharpest examples of the intense suffering that the crisis is causing our class. But the working class in the advanced capitalist countries is facing sharp racist attacks as well.

No capitalist reform, no strike, no election, will end these attacks. The only way to end them is by mobilizing the masses for communist revolution, to overthrow the bosses’ government and create a society that is based on meeting our needs, not on creating increasingly obscene profits for the few.

The US is a declining capitalist power, slowly losing its dominance to capitalist competitors in Russia and China. As a tiny elite increases its profits, working people are going under.

Union jobs are being outsourced to prison labor and nonunion subcontractors. Public resources, including the schools, are being privatized. Racist police terror and mass incarceration are devastating black and latino communities. And as the price of housing increases while wages remain stagnant, workers need to work two or three jobs to survive and many are forced out onto the street

These attacks on our class have a direct impact on our schools. Out of 640,000 students in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), 8000 are in foster care—most the victims of the epidemic of drugs and the policies of mass incarceration. More than 16,000 students—one out of 40 in the district—are homeless. And the uneven burden of racism means that these students are

concentrated near Skid Row, in South Los Angeles, and other communities of color.

The public schools that teachers hope could serve as social support have been under attack by charter school operators for more than twenty years. Charter schools are publicly funded but privately-run, mostly by big corporations with names like Animo and KIPP. In the LAUSD, there are 187 charter schools out of eleven hundred total. Their impact is larger than their numbers

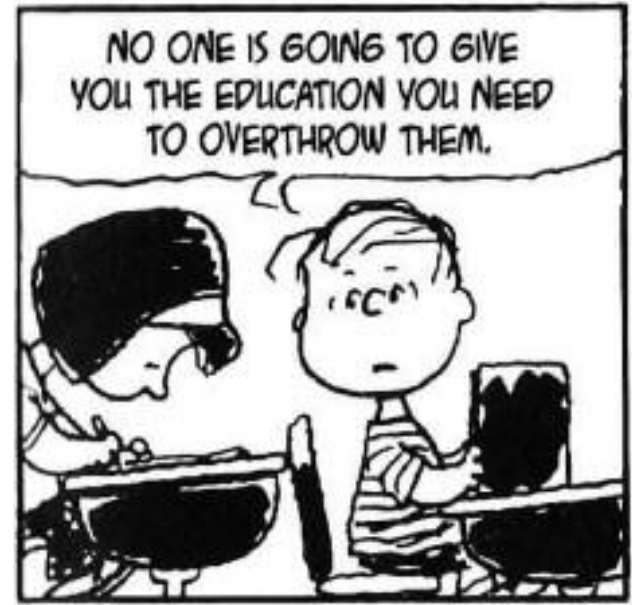
As the public schools struggle, parents who have the resources apply to charters. These schools require parent volunteer labor, strict codes of conduct, special uniforms, and very little help for kids with special needs. They suck resources away from the public schools, leaving the students most impacted by capitalism concentrated in schools without full-time nurses, counselors, psychologists or librarians.

UTLA is striking to return these resources to neighborhood schools and for better working conditions. Teaching is easier, more effective and more rewarding in a school with adequate student support and fewer students in the classroom. (There can be up to 40 students in the classroom in LA, and there’s no enforceable limit except the code imposed by the fire department.)

Teachers are also fighting to protect their jobs. More kids in charters means less job security for teachers, diminished ability to negotiate health-care and less investment in teacher pensions.

Teachers who care about their students should fight for communism

But even schools with smaller class size and a full-time librarian are capitalist institutions. They push patriotism, train our children and youth to



follow orders, and may or may not teach them the skills the capitalists need them to have. (We explored this contradiction more in “The Working Class Deserves Communist Education” in our last issue and in our pamphlet *Communist Education for a Classless Society*.)

Only in a communist society without the divisions of social class will we be able to provide the education that students deserve, an education that develops their full potential as they work together to create a world that meets the needs of all.

To create the conditions for that kind of education will be a long, hard road. It will require mobilizing the masses, not for capitalist reforms, but for communist revolution. It will require a mass communist party with the teachers, parents and students who are now fighting for better schools mobilizing for a communist future. We invite you to join the International Communist Workers’ Party to help fight for that world.



Students in Soweto, South Africa rebelled in 1976 against racist schools. They raised the slogan “Liberation before Education,” rejecting the lie that schooling creates better anti-racist fighters.

READ OUR PAMPHLET
COMMUNIST
EDUCATION FOR A
CLASSLESS SOCIETY

AVAILABLE AT
icwpredflag.org/epe.pdf

